



SEPTEMBER HEALTH TIP



This month we are talking about sleep because it is increasingly being recognized as an essential way to promote good health and prevent chronic diseases. Insufficient sleep is associated with a number of chronic diseases and conditions—such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression—which threaten our nation’s health. Insufficient sleep is also responsible for motor vehicle and machinery-related crashes, causing substantial injury and disability each year. In fact, drowsy driving can be as dangerous as driving while intoxicated. Sufficient sleep is not a luxury—it is a necessity—and should be thought of as a “vital sign” of good health.

It may surprise you to learn that insufficient sleep is linked to an increased risk for type 2 diabetes, and for those who already have type 2 diabetes, short or poor sleep is associated with decreased blood sugar control. Insufficient sleep has also been linked to obesity. Research has found that when sleep is restricted in adults, they lose less fat and their bodies produce more of a hormone that triggers hunger.

The following are a few tips for getting a good night’s rest:

- **Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day, even on the weekends.**
- **Avoid large meals before bedtime.**
- **Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol in the evening.** Nicotine and caffeine are stimulants and, contrary to what many may believe, alcohol actually disrupts sleep.
- **Get regular physical activity.**
- **Make your bedroom cool, dark, quiet and comfortable.**
- **Sleep primarily at night.** If you take a nap during the day, limit it to about a half-hour and make it during mid-afternoon.

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- **Start a relaxing bedtime routine.** Choose activities that help you wind down and that will ease the transition between wakefulness and sleep.
- **Go to bed when you're tired and turn out the lights.** If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, get up and do something else. Go back to bed when you're tired. Don't agonize over falling asleep. The stress will only prevent sleep.

For more information and resources related to sleep please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website: www.cdc.gov/sleep.

References:

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